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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER OCI #0702/68
27 March 1968Prague Stung By East German Criticism

Radio Prague today strongly rejected criticism by East German party ideologue Kurt Hager of Czech Central Committee member Smrkovsky, a possible candidate for president, and other prominent members of the new Czech leadership. In a resolution drafted by the staff of Czechoslovak radio, the Czech Central Committee was asked to "refute such inadmissible pressure expressed by a responsible personality of the GDR."

In an address before some 12,000 delegates to a two-day philosophy congress in East Berlin yesterday, Hager charged that the developments in Czechoslovakia were the result of West German policy to divide the Socialist countries and isolate the GDR. Furthermore, Hager castigated Smrkovsky "and others" as being in step with these "Bonn strategists" who hope to draw Czechoslovakia into a "whirlpool of revolution."

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COMMENT: Hager's remarks appear to be an attempt to influence the presidential election which will be held on 30 March. Hager went far beyond Hungarian ideologue Zoltan Komocsin who publicly warned the new Czechoslovak leaders against allowing anti-Socialist rightist forces from gaining a voice in the reform. Komocsin did not criticize the new programs getting underway in Prague, nor did he involve himself with personalities. Hager's charges are certain to cause a great public outcry in Czechoslovakia with pressure on Dubcek to strike back.

Rumanian Press Notes Dresden Meeting

Scinteia, the party's main daily, carried a brief, back-page announcement on 26 March that "leaders of some Communist parties and representatives of some socialist countries" met in Dresden on 23 March. Although the article noted that the participants had an "exchange of views on the most important problems of political and economic development of interest to them," it failed to note any conclusions reached other than that relating to Czechoslovakia. The article also failed to mention

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CEMA or the Warsaw Pact, but it sardonically remarked that "it was said in the communique" that the meeting took place in a friendly atmosphere.

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COMMENT: The Rumanians' cool treatment of the Dresden meeting is not at all surprising in view of their non-participation and certain aspects of the communique. Thus, Bucharest could not have subscribed to the need to "consolidate the Warsaw Treaty and its armed forces," least of all on the basis of the "growth of militarism" in West Germany.

Rumanian and Yugoslav Foreign Ministers Confer in Bucharest

The talks were held in Bucharest during 20-23 March and reportedly concentrated on topical issues such as Vietnam, the draft NPT, European security, and Yugoslav President Tito's recent proposal for a new international conference of "anti-imperialist" forces. According to the Yugoslav Ambassador in Bucharest, the Rumanians merely indicated an interest in the proposed conference without expressing a commitment with respect to their possible eventual participation.

The Ambassador also said that Tito had invited Rumanian party and state chief Ceausescu to pay an official visit to Yugoslavia. The visit will probably take place in about two months.

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COMMENT: Rumania's deepening isolation from its Warsaw Pact allies as well as its nationalist brand of Communism argue in favor of sharply stepped-up cooperation between Bucharest and Belgrade in coming months. Should this isolation continue to increase, as is expected, Rumania's strong opposition to the draft NPT--an opposition Bucharest shares with the eight nonaligned countries in the ENDC at Geneva--may serve as an added basis for Rumania to opt for participation in Tito's forthcoming conference.

Hungary Seeks Export Arrangement with Common Market

Hungary has approached European Economic Community (EEC) officials with a request for negotiations on possible Hungarian pork exports to Common Market countries.

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Hungary's break with its traditional stance towards the EEC was forecast in a February speech by Premier Fock in which he declared that Hungary would work with the EEC when it was in its national interest to do so. So far nothing has developed from the Hungarian request because Community officials have not yet decided on a position.

COMMENT: Although the Poles have already provided a precedent for such cooperation, the Hungarians may face some stiff opposition from EEC agricultural interests like the French who last year refused to guarantee continued imports of Hungarian meat after EEC tariffs took effect in July 1967.

Negotiations Continue on Renewing Soviet-Rumanian Friendship Treaty

A Soviet diplomat in Bucharest said on 23 March that Rumanian Deputy Foreign Minister Marin was in Moscow discussing the renewal of the Soviet-Rumanian friendship treaty. He did not indicate any prospect of early agreement, saying "after all, the treaty already has been extended automatically for five years."

On the same day in Bucharest, the Polish Ambassador told a UK diplomat that Marin was not making any progress in Moscow. According to the Pole, the talks are deadlocked on the issue of circumstances in which the treaty's mutual military assistance clause could be invoked. The Rumanians assertedly insist that the commitment to come to aid of the other party apply only in the case of an attack by an "imperialist" country.

COMMENT: The treaty was automatically renewed for another five years on 4 February, its 20th anniversary. The low level of discussions and Bucharest's defiance of Moscow at Budapest and Sofia do not suggest that basic bilateral problems are likely to be resolved in the near future. An added reason for the Rumanians' very specific bargaining position is that the treaty's present language could be construed by the Communist Chinese as aimed in part at Peking.

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Rumanian-Canadian Trade Agreement Signed

The 3-year agreement was signed in Ottawa on 22 March and is Canada's first with Rumania since before World War II. The agreement grants MFN treatment to Rumania in return for a minimum purchase by Bucharest of C\$9 million over the 3-year period. The Rumanians additionally agreed to give the Canadians "every consideration ... as a source of competitive goods" required by Bucharest.

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COMMENT: The agreement is part of Bucharest's overall drive to underpin its political independence of the European Communist world with increased economic ties with the West.

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